

## CHRISTIAN DRUM CIRCLES

July 8, 2008 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Drum circles are growing in popularity in North American society in general and are beginning to be used in ecumenical and emerging churches.

A drum circle is a group of people who get together to beat out rhythms on various types of drums and to be carried along by the interminable pounding beat. Drum circles are a logical outgrowth of the addiction to the rock & roll back beat, which is an integral part of contemporary Christian worship.

The group Rhythm Praise is dedicated to hosting drum circles and “rhythm events.” It is said to “open up a dialog within a community where communication, shared values, self-esteem and unity can be attained” (<http://www.rhythmpraise.org/>). It is “a vehicle to break down barriers between people and to foster healing.”

Mike Perschon is the associate pastor of Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He teaches contemplative practices at youth retreats. Writing for the Youth Specialties web site in 2004, Perschon described entire nights “devoted to guided meditations, drum circles, and ‘soul labs’” (“Desert Youth Worker: Disciplines, Mystics and the Contemplative Life,” Youth Specialties, [www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/spirituality/desert.php](http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/spirituality/desert.php)). This was part of the church’s “alternative spiritual expressions.”

In 2004 the Cameron United Methodist Church in Denver, Colorado, hosted a community drum circle night entitled “drumming up the spirits” (Christine Stevens, “Drumming up the Spirits,” *Christian Sound & Song*, Issue 9, 2005, [http://www.ubdrumcircles.com/article\\_spirits.html](http://www.ubdrumcircles.com/article_spirits.html)). This was “a kick-off to future church based drumming programs” and since then the women’s spirituality group has taken up drumming.

Stevens says: “Drumming is happening in churches across America. It is being used in children’s programs, worship services, family events, and men’s and women’s groups.”

The Church of the Holy Comforter of Richmond, Virginia, founded by Regena Stith, uses drum circles. Stith first experienced the drums in the late 1990s during a yoga retreat (Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone*, p. 70). She said that during the drumming “you move out of your head.”

Roger Oakland writes:

“Even though some in the emerging church might consider the drumming at the Church of the Holy Comforter in Richmond a bit extreme, it is growing in popularity and use in the

postmodern religious scene. And according to proponents, drumming is a doorway for ecumenical harmony” (*Faith Undone*, p. 70).

Oakland quotes Zachary Reid who says drumming “can transcend denominational and cultural boundaries” (“Feeling the Beat: The Spiritual Side of Drum Circles,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, March 10, 2007).

Oakland also sites an article by Asher Main at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship web site (March 2005), that says, “It would be to our advantage as worshippers to harness this resource that we see in secular world culture and adapt it and bring it into the church.”

I have a niece who was heavily involved in drum circles when she was using hallucinogenic drugs. The weekly drum circle became her “church.” She would dance for hours in a trance-like state, caught up in the power of rhythm. After she repented and got right with the Lord she realized that she had been communing with devils.

Can you imagine the Lord Jesus and Peter and John sitting by the Lake of Galilee pounding away on drums in order to have a mystical experience with God, and the rest of the disciples dancing around in a trance!

When one lets go of a strict commitment to the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice and rejects the biblical practice of separation from error (Romans 16:17; Ephesians 5:11), there is no end to the confusion that can result.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

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